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## WHITHER, ETHICS IN MEDICINE?

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(Conclusion)

### CONTRACEPTION

Whatever else may be said of the leaders in the birth control movement, stupidity is not one of their characteristics. They know the sophisticated popular mind and what needs to be done to engage its support. When they discovered that "contraception" had begun to sound a discordant note they deftly replaced it with "prevention" as the purpose of their movement. The lax public conscience is rendered insensible by euphemisms. And, just as "euthanasia" is the euphemism for medical murder or suicide, "abortion" for foeticide, so are "birth control", "contraception", and "prevention" for sex perversion.

The sexual organs subserve the functions of procreation and pleasure. They exist wholly in neither sex, the one being but the complement of the other. The functions are not essential to the well-being of either and they may be rightly disposed only through the mutual agreement of lawful marriage. Though procreation is their primary function it may be subordinated to the function of pleasure in a natural way without doing violence to nature. But when a mechanical or chemical contrivance is interposed between the sexes the act becomes an un-

natural one and is therefore perverted. Stripped of its euphemistic dress the practice of contraception is synchronized bisexual masturbation. Prevalence is no indication of normality: it is rather an index of our social depravity.

Dismissing the moral and aesthetic objections to the birth control movement with these few remarks, let us concern ourselves with some of the sociological aspects.

There is dinning in our ears and flashed before our eyes in all the pages of history the one solid foundation of all human advancement, of civilization itself—Sacrifice! As it is with the nations so it is with individuals; personal interests, the sensual appetite, must be curbed. Children are reared in the self-sacrificing devotion of parents; the community in the beneficence of the talented towards the less gifted; the nation secured in peace by the protection of the rights of the unprivileged. Character is built only through self-restraint or self-control.

The purposes of the propaganda of the contraceptionists are two-fold: to inform the public of the benefits of eugenic child-bearing and the harm of too frequent pregnancies. But, as most of it has concerned itself with the

description of contraceptive devices and the detailed manner of their use, the mails have been officially closed to it. Actually, that is not so; matters of contraceptive import are still distributed under the guise of "incidentals of feminine hygiene". And here we may ask how is Eugenics furthered by the indiscriminate publicity and sale of materials whose purposes are anti-genic?

The denial of the mails to the contraceptionists has so hindered the progress of their movement that they have resorted to direct contact and open advertising in journals and stores. And, as the adult population is not responding with sufficient alacrity they are cultivating the juveniles — with more immediate success. And, quite incidentally, the most conspicuous displays, in some parts of the country, have been in the proximity of the high schools. And the rumor is widespread, and not unfounded, that there is an increased incidence of juvenile pregnancy and unwed maternity. It has been my own observation in this matter that, even through the depression, there has been a gradual increase in its incidence.

UNWED MATERNITY <sup>21</sup>

AGE	YEARS					
	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
21 & over	24	20	22	22	24	23
Under 21	36	12	22	23	15	32
Total	60	32	44	45	39	55

And as the numbers increase the spread is more dense in the earlier years.

JUVENILE MATERNITY <sup>21</sup>

AGES	YEARS					
	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
14	0	0	2	0	0	0
15	2	1	1	1	2	3
16	5	1	4	3	1	3
17	5	6	4	3	6	6
18	7	2	2	4	3	6
19	10	1	5	6	1	5
20	7	1	4	6	2	9
Total	36	12	22	23	15	32

The juvenile is impetuous, in many respects unreasonable and, much more than his age-sobered elder, inclined to the gratification of his sensual nature. Fear of disease will not deter him, nor, in most cases, will it persuade him to be cautious or to take precautions. An epidemic of social diseases, profligacy, and bastardy lies in the wake of this movement.

And, with one exception—bastardy—what applies to Contraception, applies more emphatically to Sterilization. Our English brethren who have studied the problem in relation to mental deficiency report: <sup>22</sup> "Sterilization does not improve the mental condition and it does not lessen sexual activity. The unstable and antisocial defective remains unstable and antisocial. The thief remains a thief. The erotic girl or youth will still need institutional care. The impossibility of procreation will not save them from being a social menace." In the face of these conclusions the J. A. M. A. proposes that we who possess the only dependable information and knowledge of public health, shall content ourselves with standing by in an attitude of "scientific detachment" while these

misinformed zealots enjoy a feast of human mutilations. "The medical profession can perhaps serve its purpose best by assessing the biologic and social results"<sup>6</sup> of the carnage. Is it any wonder that organized Medicine has lost prestige when, in the face of its own convictions,<sup>23</sup> it succumbs to fantastic schemes of social betterment, following rather than leading the blind in the matter of social health legislation!

The incidence of cancer is increasing and cancer of the uterus is participating in the increase. Injuries incidental to child-birth are given as a reason. Yet the women of the past bore many more children than those of the present day and they did not have the benefits of modern surgery. They knew little of the methods of contraception. Is it not more likely that contraception in the form of chemicals may be the responsible factor?

Gynecologists are concerned with the health of the female organism. Often, for social reasons alone, they institute measures to obviate the possibility of pregnancy. They do but cut into their co-ordinated activities as obstetricians. There were 600,000 fewer births in 1933 than in 1921. It is not difficult to see the ramifying results of this short-sighted policy as it affects Medicine in all its spheres.

*Drug Topics*,<sup>24</sup> an organ of the pharmaceutical trade, sponsors the movement because it means \$208,000,000.00 annually to the

business. It is not farsighted enough to see still further when the reduction in the birth rate will affect materially, and more deeply, the sale of other merchandise. The future of the drug trade is sacrificed for immediate profits.

Nations<sup>25</sup> are interested in their population and of those of rival countries. France, where contraception is most widely practiced, and where its results are most conspicuous, suspiciously eyes Germany whose man-power is more than 3 to her 2, and bellows for "guarantees of security". Germany, which has taken up the movements of sterilization and birth control, in like manner watches Italy, whose birth rate and total births outnumber its own though the total population is less. And we are showing signs of concern because of the decrease here. We know that nothing can stop the ingenuity of man; that security is to the strong; that a falling birth rate is an omen of economic stagnation. Yet, we blindly foster every movement that encourages it.

But how does all this come about? Why is the common weal sacrificed to selfish interest? We have lost sight of fundamental principles because expediency is the philosophy of our schools. Publicity and the fame that attaches to it rather than intrinsic merit are the bases of professorial position and advancement. Context means little. Faced by an audience of his colleagues, Prof. Thimblewit treads cautiously, pre-

senting his own work in the name of "one". How often have you been driven to distraction while listening to him speaking, let us say, on Technique: "One must choose one's subject to one's liking and subject it to the test of experiment. One must gather the results and arrange them so as to prove the premise with which one started the study. And, lest one overlook a pertinent detail in the unused or discarded evidence that might be considered relevant by one's critics one must draw one's conclusions circumspectly."

There is money in Science. And the cringing press cares nil for verities if, by distortion or ambiguity, the matters of Science can be made intelligible to the masses. And Thimblewit panders to it in anonymity: <sup>26</sup> "While it is true that half-wits beget half-wits and criminals beget criminals and for that reason should be made sterile the 'black sheep' who break the hearts of respectable parents are no longer thought to be the reincarnations of some long dead criminal ancestors." And how weirdly and sensationally Dr. Cornish's experiments were presented! And what sorrow and gloom followed in the wake of the news-hawk who "covered" the meeting of pathologists at which the spectacular results following the use of an adrenal extract were reported!

We have passed through many phases since the dawn of our country but none so sharply as the

change in our philosophy. Washington, living in an agrarian era, retired to private life admonishing the people: "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."

We had heard during the past decade in which the Industrial Era reached the zenith of its physical and intellectual power, that: the old religion was dead; the old morality was out-moded; religion must conform to the times. And we lived it in ruthless disregard of our fellow-man, crying out with Cain: "I am not my brother's keeper." We have seen that philosophy extolled as rugged individualism.

Roosevelt came into office beholding the ruins of this rugged individualism. His first public act as a national figure, his last as a private citizen, was to kneel before God in the Church of his persuasion to ask Him for the strength and wisdom to lead his nation aright. He has said that the money changers must be driven from the temples of finance. And he keeps on reiterating that there must be a reign of social justice. Does that sound as though the old morality is dead; or that the bells which peal out the old Faith are moss-covered or broken? The principles of ethics have not

changed in all the Ages past; and they are equally valid today!

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## OUR CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

The religious objective of the Catholic hospital must be detectable in every department and in every fraction of the department's activity. It is the unifying, the integrating, the only truly significant feature of the Catholic hospital. For this reason, even the principles of administration of a Catholic hospital as well as the details of administration must necessarily be different in a Catholic hospital than they are in a non-Catholic institution. Hospital administration thus achieves a new significance as applied to a Catholic institution. We may go so far as to say that if a Catholic hospital fails to maintain a high degree of excellence of hospital service, it fails only partially but if it fails in the smallest part to

achieve its Catholic significance in any detail, it fails totally. Not that the faith and Catholicity can ever be taken as excuses for inadequacy in services, slovenliness in management, lethargy or indifference in public relations, carelessness in medical care. Any institution which so uses its Catholicity is not truly Catholic for every institution that is truly Catholic will recognize its work to be the work of Christ and no work can be worthy of Christ unless it is performed with the expenditure of every ounce of energy, every fraction of self-restraint, every iota of dignity, every minutia of perfect attention. This is what we demand of a Catholic hospital to be truly Catholic.—REV. A. M. SCHWITALLA, S.J.